Music at Convocation Hall

Music at Convocation Hall I

James Winn, piano

Friday, April 4, 2008
7:15 pm *Pre-Concert Introduction*
by **Mary Ingraham**
Main floor, Convocation Hall
8:00 pm *Concert*

Convocation Hall
Arts Building
University of Alberta

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

Program

Chorale Prelude "Nun Freut Euch, Lieben Christen" (1784-1787) (Transcribed 1907-1909)
Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)
Transcribed by Ferruccio Busoni (1866-1924)

Andante con Variazioni in F Minor, H. XVII/6 (1793)
Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)

Gaspard de la Nuit (1908)
Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)
- Ondine
- Le Gibet
- Scarbo

Intermission

Sonata in C Major, Op. 53 (1804) "Waldstein"
Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)
- Allegro con brio
- Introduzione: Adagio molto - Rondo: Allegretto moderato

Program Notes
Written by Melaena Allen Grierson

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)
Johann Sebastian Bach needs very little introduction as one of the canonical composers of history, whose contributions have resonated throughout the world for centuries. It is perhaps not widely known that the Bach family was one of several professional musical families in that time and area who transmitted the skills within the family in the manner of the Bachs, all of whom tended to intermarry and associate among themselves in the manner of guilds. Johann Sebastian is the best known of this group, but he was also preceded and succeeded by many of his relatives, all notable musicians in their own right.

Trained in organ performance by an older brother, Bach assumed an early role as a professional organist, and his virtuosity on the instrument came to be well known during his lifetime. In his keyboard compositions, Bach broke with the accepted practice of communal repertoire between the harpsichord and organ, and chose instead to write specifically for one or the other.

Bach's output was prodigious, and includes over 200 church cantatas, over 150 choral preludes and other forms of organ music, two volumes of *Das wohltemperirte Clavier*, the *Goldberg Variations*, *Mass in B Minor*, *St. Matthew Passion*, the *Brandenburg Concertos*, and numerous other works that have since entered into the musical canon and are beloved by audiences today.

Ferruccio Busoni (1866–1924)
Busoni was an Italian composer and virtuoso pianist who lived for most of his life in Germany and Austria. Born into a musical family (his mother was a pianist, and his father a clarinet virtuoso) he had an eclectic musical education, studying for short periods with various institutions and teachers. His career as a virtuoso pianist began in 1873, and in spite of Busoni's attempts to promote his own compositions, his performance abilities would prove to be his best-known asset.

As a virtuoso performer, Busoni's repertoire was enormous. In both roles as composer and performer, however, his homage was entirely due to Mozart, Bach, and Lizst. In concert, he rarely performed works of the twentieth century other than his own. As a composer, he rejected the atonal influences of the times, but was influenced by Amerindian folk music, Gregorian chant, new scales, and microtones. His compositions are not widely known, and his Bach transcriptions are often held in higher acclaim than his original works.

Busoni was also a prolific writer, with more than 15,000 autograph letters, encompassing travelogues, personal memoirs, political commentary, and so on.

***Chorale Prelude "Nun Freut Euch, Lieben Christen" BWV 734* (c.1751)**
(Bach–Busoni)
As a devout Lutheran, preludes based on Lutheran chorales—a German Protestant song tradition—were central to Bach's output. From our vantage point centuries removed, it must be remembered that these melodies would have been well known to Bach's audiences.

Busoni was not the only pianist-composer of his day to transcribe Bach's works; Liszt, Tausig, Stradal, and Raff also engaged in this activity. This short work is a Busoni transcription of a chorale prelude of Bach. Both Bach and Busoni to an equal degree, this work represents not a simple transcription or arrangement, but rather an elaboration of the original to such a degree that it is difficult to know where Bach ends and Busoni begins.

Compositionally, Busoni often approached these transcriptions with the goal of making a difficult piece even more difficult. In performance, he believed that the adage of playing Bach without the pedal should be disregarded for these transcriptions.

Joseph Haydn (1732–1809)
An Austrian composer who has entered into the classical canon, Haydn needs hardly any introduction. Since the 19th century his name has been linked in a trio of the "Viennese Classics" of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven. He is widely regarded as the father of the symphony and of the string quartet, which forms he did not invent, but rather expanded and irrevocably changed from their original.

Haydn's early musical talent was apparent in his singing voice as well as his facility with violin and harpsichord. His voice afforded him a good career in his youth, and when his voice broke, he spent eight years teaching before turning to composition. His compositional career was begun (but did not end) in the age of patronage, and he spent much of it at the court of the Hungarian Esterházy family.

He was extremely prolific, and some of his works remain unpublished to this day. His best known works include his oratorios *The Creation* and *The Seasons*, and the various symphonies known by surname such as the *Surprise, Military, and Clock* symphonies.

***Andante con Variazioni in f minor H. XVII/6* (1793)**
This work consists of a set of double variations, followed by two variations for each theme and an extended coda. The F minor theme is a modified version of a phrase from his tragic opera *L'Anima del filosofo*, in which the sorrowful Orpheus, mourning for Eurydice, longs for death. This theme is coupled with a consoling theme in the tonic major. This work is one of Haydn's most profound variations for piano, and also one of his most popular.

Maurice Ravel (1875–1937)
Most famous for his orchestral work *Bolero*, Ravel was a French composer and performer. Also enrolled at the Paris Conservatoire, he was a student of Fauré and a contemporary of Enesco. His compositional style shows a visible progression, although his musical character was established fairly early in his career. Ravel's use of figured bass shows an attachment to functional harmony, yet he also favoured extended chords such as ninths and elevenths, and experimented with bitonality through chromatic passing tones and unresolved appoggiaturas.

Like his contemporary Debussy, Ravel was also deeply influenced by the exoticisms of the 1899 Paris Exhibition, such as Javanese and Russian musical styles. His use of the North American blues idiom can also be attributed to this fascination with the exotic, and his openness to jazz and bitonality caused considerable comment in the press at the time.

***Gaspard de la Nuit* (1908)**
I. Ondine
II. Le Gibet
III. Scarbo
A work in three movements, *Gaspard de la Nuit* is based on the poetry of Aloysius Bertrand. A programmatic work, each section recreates a pictorial aspect of the poetry. The first movement, *Ondine*, in its tinkling and cascading passages, portrays a river and its water fairy, luring men to their doom. *Le Gibet* evokes the hangman's noose, with a mournful Bb octave tolling the bells in the distance, and *Scarbo* is the transcendant figure of the night, half goblin, half ghost, fiendishly mischievous.

Not a work for the faint of heart, the piece is so complex that Ravel occasionally resorts to three staves to fully notate it.

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)
Although Beethoven is known indisputably as a composer, he was in his own lifetime also a noted performer and improviser. His compositional style is rooted in the classical thought of composers such as Haydn, with whom he studied, and forms a bridge to the Romantic era where he in his turn exerted great influence over later composers. His music can be divided into periods that roughly correspond with his personal life; in early periods, he mastered and gained control over established styles; the middle period marked the introduction of music in the heroic vein; and the late period saw his most complex and personal innovations, as well as a newfound interest in folk song and melody.

Sonata in C major, Op. 53 "Waldstein" (1804)
I. Allegro con brio
II. Introduzione: Adagio molto
III. Rondo: Allegretto moderato
The *Waldstein*, so named because it was dedicated to Beethoven's friend and patron Count Ferdinand Waldstein of Vienna, is widely considered to be one of Beethoven's best sonatas. Composed during his middle period, it has tremendous scope, and is one of his most technically challenging compositions. In three movements, the first ("with fire") has two subjects, one in the tonic and a dolce theme in the mediant, signifying Beethoven's first use of the mediant rather than the dominant for the secondary group. The second movement, a short *Adagio* in 6/8 time, acts as an introduction to the third movement, the *Rondo*. A prestissimo coda ends the piece in a triumphant wave of sound.

James Winn, piano and composition professor at the University of Nevada, Reno since 1997, made his professional debut with the Denver Symphony at the age of thirteen, and has been performing widely in North America, Europe, and Japan ever since. With his duo-piano partner, Cameron Grant, he was a recipient of the top prize given in the two-piano category of the 1980 Munich Competition. Dr Winn has been a solo pianist with the New York City Ballet, a member of the New York New Music Ensemble, and of Hexagon (woodwind quintet plus piano), as well as a frequent guest with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Speculum, the Washington Square Contemporary Music Series, the Chamber Music Society of Sacramento, the Group for Contemporary Music, and Bargemusic. Well-known as a specialist in new music, he has been involved in numerous world premieres and premiere recordings by many renowned composers, among them 12 Pulitzer Prize winners (John Adams, Michael Colgrass, Mario Davidovsky, Norman Dello Joio, Jacob Druckman, Aaron Kernis, George Perle, Wayne Peterson, Mel Powell, Melinda Wagner, Charles Wuorinen, and Ellen Zwilich). He is currently a member of Argenta, UNR's resident chamber group, the pianist of the Telluride Chamber Music Festival, and performs regularly in recital with internationally acclaimed New York based violinist Rolf Schulte. An active recording artist, Winn is featured in more than three dozen CDs as soloist, chamber musician, and composer. Dr Winn's compositions have been performed internationally. He has received the College of Liberal Arts' prestigious Mousel/Feltner award for creative activity, an Artist Fellowship Grant in composition from the Nevada Arts Council, and, in 2007, was the recipient of an Award for Creative Activity from Board of Regents of the Nevada System of Higher Education.

Upcoming Events

April

5 Saturday, 8:00 pm
Master of Music Recital
Alyssa Miller, oboe
Holy Trinity Church
Free admission

6 Sunday, 3:00 pm
University of Alberta Concert Band
Wendy Grasdahl, Director
Barber *Commando March*
Latham *Three Chorale Preludes*
McBeth *Masque*
Paulson *Epinicion*
Cesarini *Huckleberry Finn Suite*
Admission: $15/adult, $10/stud/sen
Advance tickets are available exclusively at TIX on the Square, 420-1757, and tickets are available at the door

7 Monday, 12:00 pm
Music at Noon, Convocation Hall
Student Recital Series
Featuring students from the Department of Music
Free admission

7 Monday, 8:00 pm
Happnin' University of Alberta Jazz Choir
John McMillan, Director
Where I Belong - Arr. McMIllan; Grass Grows Greener - Real Group; Caravan - Arr. Darmon Meader; More Than - Arr. Kerry Marsh; Not Like This - Arr. McMillan; Shadow - Arr. Jen Kinghorn; Crush - Arr. McMillan; Smoke Gets in Your Eyes - Arr. Jen Kinghorn; Aint Nobody Here But Us Chickens - Arr. Darmon Meader
Admission: $15/adult, $10/stud/sen
Advance tickets are available exclusively at TIX on the Square, 420-1757, and tickets are available at the door

7 Monday, 7:30 pm
Grant MacEwan College and University of Alberta Jazz Bands
Raymond Baril and Tom Dust, Directors
An evening of exciting big band music selected from the libraries of the jazz greats as well as those who are currently defining the idiom.
For concert and ticket information call 497-4436

8 Tuesday, 8:00 pm
Master of Music Recital
Leslie Mahr, viola
Walton Concerto for Viola
Bach Suite No. 5 in C Minor for Solo Viola, BWV1011
Hindemith Sonata for Viola and Piano Op.11 No. 4
Free admission

9 Wednesday, 8:00 pm
Master of Music Recital
Irene Bosma, piano
JS Bach Aria variata alla maniera italiana A Minor, BWV 989 (Aria and Ten Variations in the Italian Style)
Faure Theme and Variations Op 73
Chopin Mazurkas: Op 50, No 1, G Major; Op 24, No 2, C Major; Op 68, No 2, A Minor; Op 68, No 3, F Major; Op 7, No 1, B Flat Major
and Ballade No 2, Op 38 in F Major
Ginastera Danzas Argintinas pour piano
Free admission

10 Thursday, 8:00 pm
Master of Music Recital
John Paul Ksiazek, piano
Free admission

department of Music

Unless otherwise indicated Convocation Hall, Arts Building
Advance tickets are available at TIX on the Square, 420-1757, and tickets are available at the door
Please note: All concerts and events are subject to change without further notice. For verification of events, please visit our Website: *www.ualberta.ca/music* or contact the Department of Music, Fine Arts Building 3-82, 492-0601.